18th November 1948]

High price of fuel in Bellary.

* 57 *Q.*—SRI B. BHIMA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government are aware of the fact that fuel is selling at Rs. 45 per ton in the town of Bellary ;

(*b*) whether he is aware that representations have been made to the Collector of Bellary and the Conservator of Forests, Bellary, to open a Government depot and sell fuel therein at a reasonable price ;

(*c*) whether the Government were selling fuel in Bellary till the end of January 1948 at Rs. 30 per ton ;

(*d*) whether the Collector of Bellary has sent up the representation to the Government for necessary action ; and

(*e*) whether the Government have taken any action for opening a depot for sale of fuel at a reasonable price?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" (*a*) Yes.

" (*b*) The Government understand that the hon. Member made some such representation to the Collector of Bellary. They are not, however, aware of any such representations having been made to the Conservator of Forests, Bellary.

" (*c*) No. When there was informal rationing, firewood was being sold at Rs. 36 per ton but the rationing was withdrawn with effect from 16th February 1948 on the recommendation of the District Food Committee.

" (*d*) No.

" (*e*) No. The Government understand that the main reason for the high price of firewood in Bellary town is the want of adequate railway wagon facilities for moving firewood stocks to the town. The Commissioner of Civil Supplies has moved the Regional Controller of Railway Priorities, Madras, to provide the requisite number of wagons to the contractors supplying firewood to the town and to step up the priority for fuel traffic to the town for one month. The Government trust that very soon the firewood position in the town will improve and that there will not be any need to arrange for the sale of firewood through a Government depot in the town."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" Are the Government aware, Sir, that the position has deteriorated after I have sent the interpellation? It is now selling at Rs. 60 per ton at Bellary." 11-45 a.m.

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I have no information about the actual price but I shall make enquiries."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" The Government may take it that the position has deteriorated. Will the Government then consider it necessary to take up the sale themselves and sell firewood at Rs. 30 per ton as they were selling before the decontrol? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The whole question involves reconsideration of the policy. The Government do

not consider it necessary to subsidize or control it again. If the position is so bad as to necessitate the Government selling firewood they will do so."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" There is no question of subsidizing because Government had made a profit of Rs. 30,000. Will the Government in the interests of the public take up the sale now? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Certainly; it involves a change in policy which the Government will have to consider."

Steps taken for the free flow of water under the Tungabhadra Project.

* 58 *Q.*—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state what action, if any, is proposed to be taken regarding the Tungabhadra Project so that when the waters flow in the canals they may be utilized for purposes of cultivation?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" Steps are being taken to ensure that the water available is put to the best advantage. A special staff consisting of Revenue, Agricultural and Public Works Department Officers has been sanctioned for the purpose of localization of the ayacut under the low-level canal."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Have the Government perused and come to conclusions the reports of Mr. Raghavan who wrote the special report on the Tungabadra Project? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" The Government have not come to any conclusion on it."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" Will the Government consider the desirability of consulting the people affected by this project before they come to the conclusion on the intricate points e.g., it is proposed to charge some rate called the inclusion fees; Will they also consider the desirability of consulting public opinion Sir? "

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" We shall certainly consult the hon. Members of the Legislature, Sir."

Representations to Ceylon by the Government of India.

* 59 *Q.*—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO : Will the Hon. the Minister for Public Works be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government of Madras were consulted on the various Bills affecting Indians in Ceylon before the Government of India made representations to Ceylon ; and

(*b*) whether they would place their views on the table of the House?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM :—" (*a*) No.

" (*b*) The question does not arise."